

Rep. Slaughter spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives to support the FY 2010 Defense Authorization Bill. The bill will help protect American lives and ideals, both at home and abroad.

Rep. Slaughter's full prepared remarks are included below.

Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules I call up House Resolution 808 and ask for its immediate consideration.

For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Diaz-Balart. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have five legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials into the Record.

I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the rule provides for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2647, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010." The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered without any intervening motion except one hour of debate and, if applicable, one motion to recommit.

This bill was introduced on June 2, 2009, by Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and referred to the Committee on Armed Services. The Committee on Armed Services marked up the bill on June 16, 2009. The Committee ordered the bill favorably reported, as amended, by voice vote on June 16, 2009, and the bill was reported on June 18, 2009.

On June 23, 2009, the Committee on Rules reported a structured rule making in order 69 amendments. The rule passed the House by a vote of 222 – 202 (Roll no. 452) on June 24, 2009. H.R. 2647 passed the House by a vote of 389 – 22, 1 present on June 25, 2009. (Roll no. 460). The measure passed the Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent on July 23, 2009. Both Houses appointed conferees, and the conference report was filed on Wednesday, October 07, 2009.

The defense authorization bill has already been approved by both the House and Senate. It's one of the most important bills that we consider up here because these funds go directly to our military – to the men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect this country.

Despite any differences about our ongoing missions in Afghanistan or Iraq, I think we all agree that funds that have already been approved as part of the annual spending plan should not be held up for any reason – not with our troops in harm's way.

This bill authorizes \$550.2 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy (DOE), and also authorizes \$130 billion for overseas contingency operations for FY 2010.

For our servicemen and women, it authorizes a pay raise of 3.4% for military; expands TRICARE health coverage for reserve members, bars fee increases on TRICARE inpatient care for one year and provides \$2.2 billion for housing programs to improve the quality of life for families.

On Afghanistan, this bill responds to concerns raised by members of both parties.

It requires an assessment of progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan toward security and stability. It also bans permanent bases in Afghanistan and provides funds to train and equip the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

There is also language in the bill that requires a reporting system to register and track all U.S. defense items that are provided to Afghanistan and Pakistan – to help combat waste and fraud.

This is especially important in light of recent news stories showing that millions of dollars destined for Pakistan to battle militants and al-Qaida has been diverted to the domestic economy or for other purposes.

In fact, between 2002 and 2008, while al-Qaida regrouped, only \$500 million of the \$6.6 billion in American aid actually made it to the Pakistani military, according to two army generals quoted in an Associated Press story from earlier this week.

Within this bill is authorization for 30 F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and the continued development and procurement of the F136 Joint Strike Fighter competitive engine, but does not authorize the advance procurement or procurement of F-22 aircraft.

And it authorizes \$6.7 for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, which fully funds the new MRAP All-Terrain variant requirement for Afghanistan. We all have seen far too many reports of our troops dying because their vehicles are ripped apart by road side bombs – we can and must do more to protect them from these risks.

Under the provisions of this bill the military will increase by 30,000 Army troops, 8,100 Marines, 14,650 Air Force personnel, and 2,477 Navy sailors in FY2010.

It also authorizes an additional 30,000 Army troops in Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012, provides \$4.7 billion for training opportunities for the Army and authorizes \$11 billion for Army reset and \$2 billion for Marine Corps reset, authorizes \$6.9 billion for National Guard and Reserve equipment shortfalls, and provides authority to re-structure the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program and take measures to reduce costs of procurement.

This bill provides support for the plan to increase the size of our civilian workforce so that we can reduce DOD's reliance on contractors for core acquisition functions. This bill also provides DOD with the needed flexibility to reform the DOD hiring process and reduce fraud, waste, and

abuse through enhanced contractor oversight.

This bill speaks to vessels carrying DOD cargo in high piracy risk areas by requiring that they be equipped with appropriate non-lethal defense measures. And it strengthens DOD's ability to face threats and vulnerabilities by improving research and promoting military and civilian cyber workforce development.

It improves accountability and oversight in awarding defense contracts by providing the Defense Department the authority to require return of award and incentive fees. And the bill prohibits a company from being awarded future contracts if its action leads to a service member's death or severe injury.

To address concerns about treatment of detainees, the bill bans interrogation of detainees by contractors and requires the Department of Defense to give the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) prompt access to detainees held at the Bagram Theater Internment Facility in Afghanistan.

In addition, the bill reforms the Military Commissions Act to clarify rules and improve trial procedures to make military commissions fair and effective and puts new revisions into place that would forbid the use of statements alleged to have been secured through cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Finally, the bill provides the accused with enhanced ability to select their own counsel and to make hearsay evidence harder to use in court. And it improves procedures for the handling of classified information while also permitting military commissions to continue existing cases for 90 days or until revisions have been made to supporting court manuals and handbooks.

This authorization bill matches the Administration's request for \$9.3 billion for missile defense programs. It provides the resources necessary to meet threats facing the United States, our deployed forces, and our friends and allies and provides \$2.2 billion to support the Department of Energy's non-proliferation programs. And it strengthens the Stockpile Stewardship Program to ensure the nuclear weapons stockpile is safe, secure, and reliable without the use of underground testing.

Further, the bill provides technical and financial support to local law enforcement and prosecutors so that they can more aggressively try violent crimes which are motivated by the victim's race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; expands the ability of federal prosecutors to try similar types of cases in federal court if state or local officials are unable or unwilling to prosecute these cases; and criminalizes attacks against U.S. service members on account of their service to country.

I want to address one last point. This bill includes new hate crimes legislation that would prohibit offenses based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability of any person. This kind of far-reaching protection is important for America and I am proud to support it.

There are still far too many incidences of violence in and around our schools and churches. During the last 10 years, 69 people have been killed or injured at church, while another 122 people have died in or around their school. These numbers are troubling – and one only has to look at the beating death of Chicago teenager Derrion Albert outside his high school to see how disturbing it is to see violence in schools. I hope we can bring an end to this sorrow.

I reserve the balance of my time.